

Some Reasons why a Learned and Reverend Divine hath lately taken the Oaths to their Majesties King *William* and Queen *Mary*.

In a Letter to a Friend.

SIR,

I Thank you for the favour of Communicating the grateful (tho I cannot say unexpected) News of an eminent Divine of our Church, who has a long time strugled the Oaths to their present Majesties; has now at last answered all his Doubts, and reconciled his Judgment to the Interest of the Protestant Religion, by affording his Talent to the support of their present Majesties, who, under God, are now the Defenders of it, not only here, but all *Europe* over. I wish your next Letter might bring me the much to be wished for Account of all our Worthy Prelates and Divines, who have laboured long under that Difficulty, obtaining the like Victory.

And whereas you, at the same time, give me to know the Discourses of several Men, who are no great Lovers of our Church, about it; as if this great Man seemed to be ruled by Interest in this Affair, because he has stood out so long, and now (as they think) all of a sudden taken it, I shall beg the Liberty of briefly giving you my Sentiments about it.

And first, All own that an Oath is a Sacred thing, and therefore requires the greatest Deliberation in the World before it be taken. An inconsiderate Man may rashly venture upon an Oath, but a thinking, and an honest constant Man, will be loath to engage himself by any Oath, till he has fully considered all that may follow upon it, which must needs cost a Man

some time: But especially, when Scruples arise, that the Oath imposed upon, interferes with another Oath formerly taken, then it must needs cause great Worryings in the Mind of a truly honest Man, which cannot be easily appeased, which was the Case of this famous Divine. It's to be fear'd there are too many who have taken the Oath with little or no Deliberation, who are more to be pitied, than he, who rather than he should take it with the manifest scruple, would run the hazard of Temporal Inconveniences.

And in the new place, when the Oath imposed, seems to contradict former Opinions, it must needs render a person very averse from taking of it, and take up a great deal of time before he can divest himself of those Principles. You and all Men know sufficiently, that it has been the Opinion of many of the Clergy of England, that an Oath taken to a Prince, obliges the Subject to him for his Life-time, if he were the greatest Oppressor that ever lived. And therefore it must needs be supposed, That this Reverend Person could not easily, and in a short time, get free of this difficulty.

Those Persons ought rather to rejoyce, that those Tenets that have been foisted into our Church, no less prejudicial to the King than the Subjects, (as late Experience demonstrates beyond all contradiction) are now justly repudiated, as the principal Causes of all the Miseries we have met with, than to vent their Spleen

against a Learned Gentleman, for not having his Conscience at their Beck.

I may likewise add, That such is the Nature of Man, that even in the best of Men there is a Vanity of retaining their former Opinions, left by changing them, however prejudicial otherwise they may be, they should undergo the Imputation of Changlings. I do not say this is the Case of any, but even a good Man may even be Byast with this, and it may be a long time before this may be overcome.

I shall here add some few of those many weighty Reasons or Considerations which I humbly conceive have prevailed with this Reverend Person to take the Oaths;

Reason I. Because it is evident, That no Rule or Form of Government is prescribed by the Law of God and Nature; for that then they would be both immutable, and the self-same in all Countries; but Almighty God concurreth or permitteth such particular Forms which the Common-wealth appoints. Can any Man say, That God did not concur as well with *Italy* when it had but one Prince, as now when it hath so many; and the like with *Germany*, and also with *Switzerland*, which was once one Common-wealth; under the Dukes of *Austria*? *England* also was first a Monarchy under the *Brittains*, and then a Province under the *Romans*, and after that divided into Seven Kingdoms at once; under the *Saxons*; and after them of the *Danes*; and then the *Normans*; and then the *French*; and now a Monarchy again under the *Englifs*, and all this by God's Providence and Permission, who suffered his own peculiar People the *Jews* to be under divers manner of Governments at divers times; as first under the Patriarchs, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; then under Captains, as *Moses*, *Joshua*, and the like; then under Judges, as *Osboniel*, &c. then

under High-Priests, as *Eli* and *Samuel*; then under Kings, as *Saul*, *David*, and so on, until the Government was justly taken from them, and they brought under the Power of the *Romans*. And last of all, That God does concur with what Magistrate or Magistrates the Community thinks fit to appoint, is plain by the Testimony of Holy Scripture, as when God said to *Solomon*, By me Kings Rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth, Prov. 8. 16. that is, by His Permission they Govern, tho' Chosen by the People: And St. Paul to the *Romans* avoucheth, that Authority is not but of God, and therefore he that resisteth Authority, resisteth God, Rom. 13. which is to be understood of Authority, Power, and Jurisdiction in it self, according to the Laws of every Country.

Reason II. Because Allegiance is nothing but Obedience according to Law, which when the Prince violates, he has no right to Obedience, there being a mutual Obligation between the King and People, which, whether it be only Civil or Natural, tacit, or in express Words, can be taken away by no Agreements, violated by no Law, rescinded by no Force; for a Kingdom is nothing else but the mutual Stipulation between the People and their Kings: The Supream Authority of a Nation belonging to those who have the Legislative Authority reserved to them; but not to those who have only the Executive, which is plainly a Trust, when it is separated from the Legislative Power; and all Trusts by their nature import, That those to whom they are given, are accountable, tho' no such condition is specified. If the Subject may in no case Resist, then there can be no Law but the Will and Pleasure of the Prince; for whosoever must be opposed in nothing, may do every thing.

If the King Sue, by pretence of Law, and endeavour to take away my Money,

my House, or my Land, I may defend them by the Law; but if he comes Armed to take away my Liberty, Life, and Religion, which are mine by the Laws of God and Man, may I not secure them with a good Conscience; for most certain, every Man has a right to preserve himself, his Rights and Privileges, against him who has no Authority to invade them: And this was the Case of *Moses*, who seeing an *Egyptian* Smiting an *Hebrew*, he Slew him: And *Sampson* made War upon the *Philistines*, for burning his Wife and her Father, who were both but private Persons, who knew they could have no other kind of Justice against them, but what the Law of Nature gives every Man.

When once the Christian Religion is become a part of the Subjects Property, by the Laws and Constitutions of the Country, then it is to be considered as one of their Principal Rights, and so may be defended as well as any other Civil Right: Since that these different Forms of Government, that the *Jews* were under, is no Rule for the Government of any Nation or People whatsoever. That Cause is Just which defends the Laws which protects the *Common Good*, which shall preserve the Realm: And that Cause is unjust which violates the Laws, defends the Breakers of the Laws, protects the Subverters of the Country. That is Just which will destroy Tyrannical Government: That Unjust which would Abolish just Government: That Lawful which tends to the Publick Good: That Unlawful which tends to the Private.

Reason III. The Children of *Israel* slew *Amasiah*, their lawful King, for his Idolatry, without any appointment in Scripture, or Prophecy of his Downfall; and yet that this is no where called Rebellion, neither were they Punished by his Son, whom they had made King in his

Father's Stead. *Mattathias* slew the King's Commissioner, for compelling Men to Idolatry. The *Edomites* Revolted from *Jehoram*, and made themselves a King. And *Libnah* did also Revolt, because of his Evil Government, *2 Chron. 21.* without any appointment or foretelling of their Revolt by God in Scripture, or being called Rebels. *Saul's* Subjects Swore, that *Saul* should not kill *Jonathans*, and they rescued him that he died not, *1 Sam. 14. 45.* *David* (tho' a private Man) Armed himself with Six hundred Men, no doubt but he designed to have Fought *Saul* and his Army, if the Men of *Kehab* would have assisted him, and been true to him, when he enquired of the Lord, Whether the Men of *Kehab* would deliver him and his Men into the hands of *Saul*? upon the Lords answering, *They would deliver them up*, he and his Men departed the City, *1 Sam. 23. 23.* can any Man imagine their meaning was to run up and down the Country together, and fly before *Saul* and his Army, if they had been able to cope with any number he could bring or send against them? If Resistance, at all times, was Unlawful, and a Sin, surely *David*, a Man after God's own Heart, would have known it, and then he would not have Involved the Six hundred Men that came to his Assistance, in the Sin of Rebellion, but have told them, that the Prince was not to be Resisted, though never so great a Tyrant. *Constantine* the Great, aided the Oppressed Christians and *Romans* against the Tyranny and Persecution of the Emperors *Maxentius* and *Maximinus*, with force of Arms, with which he Conquered those Persecutors in several Battles, Fought against them at the Christians earnest Importunity. The Primitive Christians resisted *Valerian* their Emperor, for Persecuting them contrary to Law; and *Constantine* the Great joyned with them, who held it his Duty, with *Eusebius*,

to deliver an infinite multitude of Men, by cutting off a few Wicked ones, as the Pest and Plagues of the Time. The Primitive Christians of *Constantinople* opposed *Aspers* being made Emperor; but *Lao* being named, they consented thereto. The Primitive Christians, under the King of *Persia*, resisted him for Persecuting them, and was assisted by *Theodosius* the Roman Emperor, who told the King of *Persia*, He was ready to defend them, and no way to see them suffer for Religion. The Christians of *Armenia* the G. Father, made a League with the *Romans* for the securing their Persons and their Religion, against the *Persians*, under whom they lived. The *Novations*, assisted by the *Orthodox*, resisted and beat the *Macedonians*, though they were assisted by *Constantinus* the Emperor, with Four Thousand Men to drive them from *Paphlagonia*. The Primitive Christians likewise destroyed *Julians* Idolatrous Temple in his Reign.

Reason IV. It is not our business to enquire into the Justice of all that contributed to this late Revolution in *England*; that being nothing to our Case, who had no hand in it, and so have nothing to answer for it to God nor Man, supposing it were an ill thing in it self, or that the Managers of it acted upon evil Principles, took ill Methods, or had bad Ends, we may and ought to leave this to be justified by those whom it doth concern, (who have already done it beyond all contradiction) we have performed our Oath to the late King so long as he was in a Capacity to receive it; and many of us have had no hand in putting him out of that Capacity: But whether his own deserting us, or the present Kings Conquest, did Devest him, this is certain, that he is now Devested of all Power to Protect or Govern us here, as much as if he were actually Dead. And truly, unless there be some Cases besides Natural Death, in

which our Oath ceaseth to Bind us, the case of Subjects may be extremely miserable. Particularly in *Portugal*, all the Subjects must be held to be Perjur'd, when they Sware to a new King while *Alphonso* was living: It must therefore be granted, that Madnes & Conquest may so far take off the Obligation of a People to their living King, that they may innocently Swear to another: And it is clear, that both these concurred in our Case.

We are Private Subjects, and must pay our Allegiance to him that administers us Law and Justice, and doth Protect us in all Capacities. If any wrong us in our Estates, or hurt our Persons, we fly to their present Majesties Laws for Redress, and that seems the same thing as owning them, or Swearing Allegiance, unless we think we may make use of this Government to serve our own Ends, and do nothing to serve and secure it.

It is heartily to be wished for, by all Good Men, that those Reverend Persons who still stand out, would lay aside all Prejudice; and, for the Church's sake, in which they seem to make a Schism; for their Native Countries sake, which they seem to expose by this Division; for their complying Brethrens sake, who Pity and Pray for them; and for their own and Families sake, they would not let a Notion in Politics keep them at this distance, and bring so many Calamities on them. The Oath is short and modest, nothing but what is very necessary, and required in all Governments; therefore why should they, for a nicety and scruple, which may be fully satisfied and solved, endanger their Religion and the whole Nation, and give such advantages to *Papists*, by countenancing them, and to the *Fanatics*, by opposing the present Government, who do not fail to represent it even to the Church's prejudice.